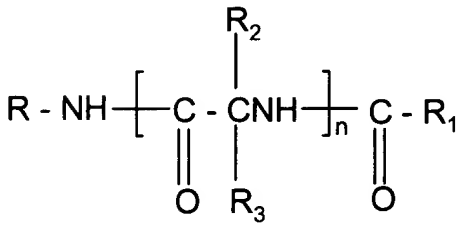
IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for alleviating pain in a patient suffering from chronic pain comprising administering to said patient an analgesic effective amount of a compound of the formula:



wherein

R is hydrogen, lower alkyl, lower alkenyl, lower alkynyl, aryl, aryl lower alkyl, heterocyclic, heterocyclic lower alkyl, lower alkyl heterocyclic, lower cycloalkyl, lower cycloalkyl lower alkyl, and R is unsubstituted or is substituted with at least one electron withdrawing group or electron donating group;

R_1 is hydrogen or lower alkyl, lower alkenyl, lower alkynyl, aryl lower alkyl, aryl, heterocyclic lower alkyl, heterocyclic, lower alkyl heterocyclic, lower cycloalkyl, lower, cycloalkyl lower alkyl, each unsubstituted or substituted with an electron donating group or an electron withdrawing group; and

R_2 and R_3 are independently hydrogen, lower alkyl, lower alkenyl, lower alkynyl, aryl lower alkyl, halo, heterocyclic, heterocyclic lower alkyl, lower alkyl heterocyclic, lower cycloalkyl, lower cycloalkyl lower alkyl, or Z-Y wherein R_2 and R_3 may be unsubstituted or substituted with at least one electron withdrawing group or electron donating group wherein the electron donating group or electron withdrawing group is acyclic; and wherein heterocyclic in R_2 and R_3 is furyl, thienyl, pyrazolyl, pyrrolyl, imidazolyl, indolyl, thiazolyl, oxazolyl, isothiazolyl, isoxazolyl, piperidyl, pyrrolinyl, piperazinyl, quinolyl, triazolyl, tetrazolyl, isoquinolyl, benzofuryl, benzothienyl, morpholinyl, benzoxazolyl, tetrahydrofuryl, pyranyl, indazolyl, purinyl, indolinyl, pyrazolindinyl, imidazolinyl, imidazolindinyl, pyrrolidinyl, furazanyl, N-methylindolyl, methylfuryl, pyridazinyl, pyrimidinyl, pyrazinyl, epoxy, aziridino, oxetanyl or azetidinyl;

Z is O, S, $S(O)_a$, NR_6', or PR_4;

Y is hydrogen, lower alkyl, aryl, aryl lower alkyl, lower alkenyl, lower alkynyl, heterocyclic, heterocyclic lower alkyl, and Y may be unsubstituted or substituted with an electron donating group or an electron withdrawing group, or

ZY taken together is $NR_4NR_5R_7$, NR_4OR_5, ONR_4R_7, OPR_4R_5, PR_4OR_5, SNR_4R_7, NR_4SR_7, SPR_4R_5, PR_4SR_7, $NR_4PR_5R_6$, ~~or~~ $PR_4NR_5R_7$,

$NR_4C\text{-}R_5$, SCR_5, $NR_4C\text{-}OR_5$, <u>or</u> $SC\text{-}OR_5$;
‖ ‖ ‖ ‖
O O O O

R_6' is hydrogen, lower alkyl, lower alkenyl, or lower alkynyl and ~~R_4~~ <u>R_6'</u> may be unsubstituted or substituted with an electron withdrawing group or electron donating group;

R_4, R_5 and R_6 are independently hydrogen, lower alkyl, aryl, aryl lower alkyl, lower alkenyl, or lower alkynyl, wherein R_4, R_5 and R_6 may be unsubstituted or substituted with an electron withdrawing group or an electron donating group; and

R_7 is $COOR_8$, COR_8, hydrogen, lower alkyl, aryl, aryl lower alkyl, lower alkenyl or lower alkynyl, which R_7 may be unsubstituted or substituted with an electron withdrawing group or electron donating group;

R_8 is hydrogen or lower alkyl, or aryl lower alkyl, and the aryl or alkyl group may be unsubstituted or substituted with an electron withdrawing group or an electron donating group; and

n is 1-4; and

a is 1-3.

2. (Original) The method according to Claim 1 wherein one of R_2 and R_3 is hydrogen.

3. (Original) The method according to Claim 1 wherein n is 1.

4. (Original) The method according to Claim 1 wherein one of R_2 and R_3 is hydrogen and n is 1.

5. (Original) The method according to Claim 1 wherein R is aryl lower alkyl and R_1 is lower alkyl.

6. (Original) The method according to Claim 1

wherein

R_2 and R_3 are independently hydrogen, lower alkyl, heterocyclic, heterocyclic loweralkyl, or ZY;

Z is O, NR_4 or PR_4;

Y is hydrogen or lower alkyl or

ZY is $NR_5R_6R_7$, NR_5OR_6, ONR_5R_7, $NR_5C(=O)-R_6$ or $NR_5C(=O)-OR_6$.

7. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 6 wherein

R_2 is hydrogen and R_3 is hydrogen, lower alkyl, heterocyclic, heterocyclic ~~loweralkyl~~ lower alkyl or ZY;

Z is O, NR_4 or PR_4;

Y is hydrogen~~,~~ or lower alkyl; ~~or~~

ZY is $NR_5NR_6R_7$, NR_5OR_6, ONR_5R_7, $NR_5C(=O)-R_6$ or $NR_5C(=O)-OR_6$.

8. (Original) The method according to Claim 6 wherein R_2 is hydrogen and R_3 is lower alkyl, which may be unsubstituted or substituted with an electron donating or electron withdrawing group, NR_4OR_5, or ONR_4R_7.

9. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 8 wherein R_3 is lower alkyl which is unsubstituted or substituted with hydroxy or lower alkoxy ~~loweralkoxy~~, NR_4OR_6 or ONR_4R_7, wherein R_4, ~~R_5~~ R_6 and R_7 are independently hydrogen or lower alkyl, R is aryl lower alkyl

~~loweralkyl~~, which aryl group may be unsubstituted or substituted with an electron withdrawing group and R_1 is lower alkyl.

10. (Original) The method according to Claim 9 wherein aryl is phenyl.

11. (Original) The method according to claim 6 wherein one of R_2 and R_3 is heterocyclic.

12. (Original) The method according to Claim 11 wherein heterocyclic is heteroaromatic.

13. (Original) The method according to Claim 11 wherein R_3 is furyl, pyridyl, thienyl or thiazolyl.

14. (Original) The method according to Claim 9 wherein aryl is phenyl and is unsubstituted or substituted with halo.

15. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 1 wherein the compound is

(R)-N-Benzyl-2-~~acetamide~~ acetamido-3-methoxy- propionamide;

O-methyl-N-acetyl-D-serine-m-fluorobenzylamide;

O-methyl-N-acetyl-D-serine-p-fluorobenzylamide;

N-acetyl-D-phenylglycinebenzylamide;

D-1,2-(N, O-dimethylhydroxylamino)-2-~~acetamide~~ acetamido acetic acid benzylamide; or

D-1,2-(O-methylhydroxylamino)-2-acetamido acetic acid benzylamide.

16. (Original) The method according to Claim 1 wherein the pain is neuropathic pain.

17. (Original) The method according to Claim 6 wherein the pain is neuropathic pain.

18. (Original) The method according to Claim 1 wherein the pain is nociceptive pain.

19. (Original) The method according to Claim 6 wherein the pain is nociceptive pain.

20-50. (Currently Cancelled)

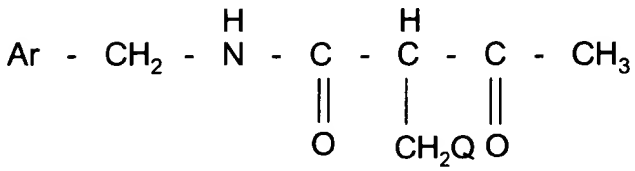
51. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 1 wherein the electron withdrawing group and electron donating group are selected from the group consisting of halo, nitro, carboxy, lower alkenyl, lower alkynyl, formyl, carboxyamido, trifluoromethyl, lower alkoxy carbonyl, hydroxy, lower alkoxy, lower alkyl, amino, lower alkylamino, dilower alkylamino ~~diloweralkylamino~~, mercapto, lower alkylthio ~~loweralkylthio~~, and lower alkyldithio.

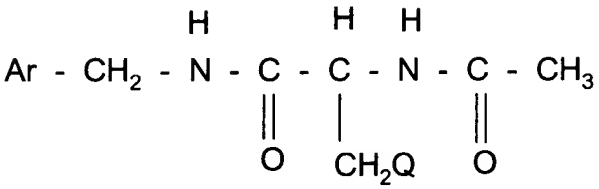
52-55. (Currently Cancelled)

56. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 1 ~~20~~ wherein the carbon atom which is substituted by R_2 and R_3 is in the D configuration.

57. (Cancelled)

58. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1 wherein the compound is of the formula:





wherein

Ar is aryl which is unsubstituted or substituted with an electron donating or electron withdrawing group, and

Q is ~~loweralkoxy~~ lower alkoxy.

59. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim ~~56~~ 58 wherein Ar is unsubstituted aryl or aryl substituted with halo.

60. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim ~~56~~ 58 wherein Q is methoxy.

61. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim ~~56~~ 58 wherein Q is methoxy and Ar is unsubstituted aryl or aryl substituted with halo.

62. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim ~~56~~ 58 wherein the carbon atom which is bonded to CH_2Q is in the D configuration.

63-72. (Cancelled)